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Greencover Canada's Land Conversion Component

Converting environmentally sensitive
land to perennial cover



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Strengthening Canada's agricultural policy

As the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector moves into the 21st century, it faces many challenges and opportunities for continued prosperity. In response, the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the agriculture and agri-food industry are working together to implement a plan to strengthen Canada's agricultural sector.

Called the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), this plan will help the sector become even stronger, more competitive, and more profitable, in markets at home and abroad.

Our goal? To ensure that Canada is a world leader in producing safe, high-quality food for Canadian and international markets in an environmentally responsible way using innovative methods.

To meet this goal, the Government of Canada has committed \$5.2 billion over six years. Taking into account cost-sharing arrangements with the provinces and territories, new investment in the Canadian agricultural sector is expected to exceed \$7 billion.

— The environment is a priority —

Canadians expect all economic sectors, including agriculture, to do their part to protect the environment—and the agricultural industry understands that environmental stewardship is key to both long-term sustainability and profitability.

Producers are working with governments to strengthen their longstanding tradition of carefully managing the environment. Through the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), new programs will build on these existing strengths to enhance air, water, and soil quality, and to improve the ability of the agricultural sector to coexist with the natural environment in a sustainable way.

— The objectives of Greencover Canada —

The Greencover Canada program is a five-year, \$110-million Government of Canada initiative to help you, as a producer, improve your grassland-management practices, protect water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

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A national program, Greencover Canada consists of four components, each with a specific focus:

- Land Conversion – converting environmentally sensitive land to perennial cover;
- Critical Areas – managing agricultural land near water;
- Technical Assistance – helping producers adopt beneficial management practices; and
- Shelterbelts – planting trees on agricultural land.

— How does the Land Conversion component work? —

The Land Conversion component will provide you with advice and financial incentives if your application to convert environmentally sensitive land to perennial cover is approved.

Who can participate?

You are eligible to participate in the program if:

- you are the **registered landowner**, or are entitled to become the registered landowner through contract or any other legal instrument, as indicated on the certificate of title, state of title certificate, certificate of possession, title of ownership, or deed (renters or leaseholders are not eligible for financial assistance);
- the land you want to convert meets program criteria based on land quality, land use, and an assessment of environmental sensitivity;
- you agree to seed your land with approved perennial plants; and
- you commit to maintain the land under perennial cover for 10 years once Greencover Canada determines the stand is established.

What kinds of land are eligible?

To qualify under this program, your land must:

- have been used for annual crop production or summerfallow as of July 1, 2002;
- be categorized as Canada Land Inventory (CLI) 4, 5, 6 or 7;
- have severe limitations for growing annual crops; **or**
- have the potential for severe degradation due to wind or water erosion, salinization, or loss of organic matter.

Note: Established forage stands are **not** eligible under the Greencover Canada program.



How much land can you convert?

The minimum amount of land that Greencover Canada will consider for conversion is **40 acres** on the same quarter-section or parcel of land. For each quarter-section or parcel of land, you must submit a separate application form.

How is your land determined to be "environmentally sensitive"?

Greencover Canada will review your proposal by assessing the proposed lands against a farmland-specific environmental sensitivity index (ESI). This index considers soil quality, air quality, landscape drainage patterns, proximity to water, and contributions to wildlife habitat and biodiversity. If your land has a high ESI, Greencover Canada will consider it a higher priority for funding.

What kinds of perennial cover can you use?

To qualify for payment, Greencover Canada requires a Certificate or Report of Seed Analysis, and seed tags which state you have met the minimum standards for seed selection and quality.

Certified seed is recommended, although the minimum acceptable seed quality is Common No. 1, or its equivalent standard for non-graded native forages. Seed must be free of downy brome and Japanese brome. Because of their tendency to spread, it is recommended that crested wheatgrass and smooth bromegrass not be seeded within three quarters of a kilometre (half a mile) of existing native rangeland. For trees and shrubs, the plant material must be adapted to the area and be long-lived.

Long-lived perennial species, such as forage, shrubs, or trees, should make up at least 75% of the seed mix. For information on suitable species, please see the standards outlined in some provincial forage guidelines or the *Greencover Canada Forage Selection Guide*, available from Greencover Canada on-line at www.agr.gc.ca/greencover-verdir or by calling 1 866 844-5620.

Where available, Greencover Canada strongly encourages you to purchase forage establishment insurance.

Note: Perennial short-term rotational crops, such as alfalfa for dehydration production, are **not** eligible under the program. In addition, the production of forage seed is **not** an eligible activity.

— What financial assistance is available? —

If Greencover Canada approves your application, you will receive two one-time payments:

- **\$20 per acre** for seeding or planting tame forage or trees and signing a Contribution and Land-Use Agreement, or **\$75 per acre** for seeding native species and signing a Contribution and Land-Use Agreement; and
- **\$25 per acre** after you establish the perennial cover, and after Greencover Canada inspects it and issues a Certificate of Stand Establishment (Greencover Canada will adjust this payment to account for any seeding overpayment).



— Do you have to sign a Contribution and Land-Use Agreement? —

The Contribution and Land-Use Agreement outlines your commitment to establish and maintain perennial cover on the land during the entire term of the agreement. Landowners must sign a Contribution and Land-Use Agreement before Greencover Canada will issue program payments.

If you later ask to terminate the Contribution and Land-Use Agreement, you will have to repay some or all of the funds that you have received under the Greencover Canada Land Conversion component. Repayment calculations are outlined in the Contribution and Land-Use Agreement.

— What is the application deadline? —

The program will accept applications for four years, from 2003 to 2006. The deadline for submitting applications after 2003 is **January 31 of each year**. The final application deadline for the program is **January 31, 2006**.

To be eligible for program funding, you will need to receive approval from Greencover Canada before you seed or plant.

— How to apply —

Use a separate application form for each quarter-section or parcel of land. For a list of suitable tame and native forage species in your area, check the *Greencover Canada Forage Selection Guide*, available on-line at www.agr.gc.ca/greencover-verdir or by telephone at **1 866 844-5620**.

Where to send your application

Send your completed application form by mail to:
Greencover Canada, Land Conversion
408-1800 Hamilton Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 4L2

To submit your application in person, please call **1 866 844-5620** for the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada office nearest you.

After you receive approval

You will receive a letter from Greencover Canada indicating your application is approved. With your letter of approval, you will also receive a Seeding Completion Request Form, Land Conversion component terms and conditions, and two copies of the Contribution and Land-Use Agreement. Greencover Canada encourages you to review these documents with your lawyer.

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If you agree to the program terms and conditions and the Contribution and Land-Use Agreement, complete your seeding or planting – then complete, sign and return the Seeding Payment Request Form, both copies of the Contribution and Land-Use Agreement, plus the Certificate or Report of Seed Analysis and seed tags. Upon receiving a signed Seeding Payment Request Form, signed Contribution and Land-Use Agreements, and a Certificate or Report of Seed Analysis, Greencover Canada will issue the initial seeding payment.



After one complete growing season, an official designated by Greencover Canada will conduct an inspection to ensure the perennial cover is established. Once the stand is determined to be established a Certificate of Stand Establishment will be issued, and you will receive the second payment.

— For more information —

For more information on Greencover Canada, and for a copy of the application form, visit our Web site at www.agr.gc.ca/greencover-verdir, or call **1 866 844-5620**.

For more details on the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), please call:

Toll-free telephone: **1 800 O-Canada** (1 800 622-6232)
Teletypewriter (TTY) for hearing- and speech-impaired clients: **1 800 465-7735**

You can also visit our Web site at www.agr.gc.ca/puttingcanadafirst for details on the APF.

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